

# CUMBERLAND (MD) TIMES-NEWS

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## Higher mileage

### Bartlett backs effort to boost standards

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett joined a bi-partisan coalition of House members calling for higher mileage requirements for U.S. automobiles as a way to conserve energy and reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil.

Bartlett, who has championed energy issues as a top priority, was one of 16 representatives to co-sponsor legislation that would raise the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards 32 percent over the next decade, to 33 miles per gallon. By 2025, this move would save 2.6 million barrels of oil each day. Lawmakers said technology exists that allows mileage to be raised without compromising safety or popular vehicle features.

Backers of the legislation, including Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-N.Y.), said American consumers would be the ultimate beneficiaries of the bill.

According to the committee, boosting mileage requirements would save buyers of large SUVs and pickup trucks \$2,000 in fuel costs over the life of the vehicle, even after paying the additional costs of the new technologies. Families buying minivans would save over \$1,000. And those savings were calculated assuming gasoline cost \$2 per gallon. At today's prices, the savings would even greater.

Bartlett's support for the bill is part of his larger campaign to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil and spur development of alternative energy sources. He is hosting a Sept. 26 conference at Frederick Community College to discuss energy issues affecting both the nation and the world.

With gas prices hovering near \$3 a gallon, lawmakers need to compel automakers to boost mileage standards. The energy crisis is not going to go away, nor will it resolve itself. With the automobile culture firmly entrenched in this country, building more fuel-efficient cars must be part of any effort to conserve oil and promote U.S. energy independence.